

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully solicited.

Claims 1 through 7, 9 through 19, 21 through 31, 33 through 40, and 44 through 46 are pending, with Claims 1, 13, 25, 37, 44, 45, and 46 being independent. Claims 8, 20, 32, and 41 through 43 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9 through 13, 16, 21 through 23, 25 through 31, and 33 through 36 have been amended. Claims 44 through 46 have been added.

REQUEST FOR RETURN OF FORM PTO-1449

Applicant respectfully requests return of the Form PTO-1449 from the January 14, 2004 Information Disclosure Statement.

RESPONSE

Claims 1 through 3, 6, 13 through 15, 18, 25 through 27, 30, and 41 through 43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,508,942 (Agarwal). Claims 4, 5, 7 through 12, 16, 17, 19 through 24, 28, 29, and 31 through 36 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form.

All rejections and objections are respectfully traversed, and are submitted to have been obviated as follows:

- (a) Claims 1, 13, and 25 have been amended to incorporate the features of objected-to Claims 8, 20, and 32, respectively, with

additional amendments that are respectfully submitted not to affect their allowability; and

- (b) Claims 44 through 46 have been formulated upon the basis of objected-to Claims 4, 16, and 28, respectively, with additional amendments that are respectfully submitted not to affect their allowability.

Favorable consideration is earnestly solicited.

The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable because they set forth additional aspects of the present invention and are dependent from independent claims discussed above. Therefore, separate and individual consideration of each dependent claim is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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